

IRS CREATES NEW WEB PAGE FOR SPECIAL ALERTS TO TAXPAYERS

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today unveiled a new page on its Web site to alert taxpayers about problems that occur during the tax filing season. The new page, called "Special Taxpayer Alerts," will describe the problem, its scope — the number of people likely to be affected, where they're located, etc. — what the IRS is doing to fix the problem, and what, if anything the taxpayer needs to do about it in the meantime.

"No one, including the IRS, likes it when mistakes occur," said Internal Revenue Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "But when they do happen, taxpayers deserve to hear about it from us right away. We know that even a 'little glitch' in an IRS system can affect many thousands of taxpayers. And they need to be alerted to the problem and know what we're doing to fix it."

The new page is found under "What's Hot" on the IRS Web site, www.irs.ustreas.gov. Like a product recall notice, IRS problem alerts will contain a brief description of a problem, its impact on taxpayers, steps the IRS is taking or has already taken to fix the problem, and what, if anything, taxpayers should do.

"In most cases, we'll be able to fix a problem in the system as soon as we discover it, and taxpayers won't have to take any action," Rossotti said. "But if they want more information, they can call 1-800-829-1040. Our telephone assistants will be kept alerted to problems caused by such things as bad notices or processing or refund delays."

If a problem arises that is widespread or will take longer to fix, the IRS will also inform the public through news releases, fact sheets, and special alerts to the news media and tax professionals. The latest IRS news releases and fact sheets are on the "IRS Newsstand" on the Web site.

"We've spent the last year and a half examining, fixing and updating all our computer software programming — more than 50 million lines of coding. And we're in excellent shape for this tax filing season," Rossotti said. "But we all know that glitches can occur in a system as large and as old as the IRS's. We think this new service will give people the practical information that they need, when they need it."

X X X